

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06  
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R 051445Z JAN 77  
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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
USINT BAGHDAD  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
USMISSION USUN NY

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PFOR, IS, JO, XF, PLO  
SUBJECT: MFA OFFICIAL SEES EROSION OF SUPPORT AMONG WEST BANKERS  
FOR ELECTED MAYORS

REF: 76 JERUSALEM 1809

SUMMARY: THE MFA'S REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ADMINISTRATION  
OF THE TERRITORIES (PINCHAS GONNEN) TOLD AN EMBOFF JANUARY 4  
THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN EROSION OF SUPPORT AMONG WEST BANKERS  
FOR THEIR FREELY-ELECTED MAYORS. KING HUSSEIN OF JORDAN  
HAS PUT HIS FINANCIAL SUPPORT BEHIND AN ALTERNATIVE LEADER-  
SHIP OF PRO-HASHEMITE RELIGIOUS FIGURES, AND WEST BANKERS  
DO NOT WANT TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE PLO AND JORDAN. END  
SUMMARY.

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1. GONNEN SAID THAT THE RECENT AMMAN VISIT BY FORMER  
HEBRON MAYOR SHEIKH ALI JA'ABARI HAD BEEN NOTEWORTHY  
FOR SEVERAL REASONS. JA'ABARI, A LONG-TIME HASHEMITE  
SUPPORTER, WAS RECEIVED OSTENTATIOUSLY BY KING HUSSEIN  
ON THE DAY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL, AN HONOR ACCORDED LATELY  
TO NO OTHER WEST BANK FIGURE. HIS CALL FOR A PALESTINIAN

LEADERSHIP DIFFERENT FROM THE PLO WAS OBVIOUSLY MADE WITH THE BACKING OF JORDAN, AND MAYBE THAT OF SYRIA AS WELL. JA'ABARI NO DOUBT WOULD RECEIVE JORDANIAN FUNDS FOR HIS INSTITUTION OF ISLAMIC STUDIES, MARKING A PAYOFF PREVIOUSLY DENIED BY THE KING NOT ONLY TO THOSE MAYORS WHO REFUSED TO MAKE THEIR PILGRIMAGE TO AMMAN, BUT ALSO TO THOSE WHO VISITED JORDAN BUT DID NOT CLEARLY COMMIT THEMSELVES ON THE SIDE OF THE KING, AND AGAINST THE PLO.

2. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS WOULD NOT BE LOST ON WEST BANKERS, GONNEN SAID. KING HUSSEIN HAS EVIDENTLY WRITTEN OFF THE PRO-PLO MAYORS, (E.G., THOSE FROM RAMALLAH, NABLUS, AND TULKAREM), WHOSE SUPPORT AMONG WEST BANKERS IS ERODING DESPITE THE FACT THAT THEY CAME INTO OFFICE THROUGH FREE ELECTIONS. THE SAME WRITE-OFF APPLIES TO FENCE-SITTERS LIKE MAYOR QAWASIMA OF HEBRON. WITH JORDAN HAVING SWITCHED ITS MONEY FROM THE MAYORALTIES TO PRO-HASHEMITE RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP FIGURES, THE WEST BANKERS NOW UNDERSTAND THAT THE NEW MAYORS CANNOT USE PLO RHETORIC TO BUILD ROADS OR SEWAGE SYSTEMS.

3. ASKED TO COMMENT ON STATEMENTS BY WEST BANKERS THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO THE UPCOMING PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL SESSION BUT CANNOT DO SO BECAUSE ISRAEL WOULD NOT PERMIT THEM TO RETURN, GONNEN SAID THAT WEST BANKERS HAVE A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE. PEOPLE DO NOT WISH TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE PLO AND JORDAN AT A TIME WHEN THE ARAB COUNTRIES HAVE WEAKENED THE PLO. AS FOR THE PNC, ITS CONVENING DEPENDS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UPON DECISIONS MADE BY CAIRO AND DAMASCUS, AND WEST BANKERS KNOW IT. (COMMENT: GONNEN SIDESTEPED THE QUESTION ABOUT THE GOI NOT PERMITTING WEST BANK PNC REPRESENTATIVES TO RETURN).

4. WEST BANK DISTURBANCES OVER VAT HAVE DIED DOWN, GONNEN SAID, BECAUSE THOSE BUSINESS PEOPLE AFFECTED BY VAT REALIZED THAT THE ISSUE WAS BEING EXPLOITED BY OTHERS FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. THE VIOLENCE ITSELF AMOUNTED MOSTLY TO STONE-THROWING BY SCHOOLBOYS, A RELATIVELY SAFE AND HARMLESS FORM OF PROTEST WHICH COULD BE EXPECTED TO REOCCUR IN FUTURE.

5. GONNEN SAID THAT THE TRIAL OF RABBI LEVINGER HAD BEEN TWICE POSTPONED DUE TO PROCEDURAL DELAYS RAISED BY THE DEFENSE, BUT HE BELIEVED THE TRIAL WOULD TAKE PLACE SOME TIME IN JANUARY. WHEN ASKED WHETHER ANY ARABS WERE STILL IN JAIL OVER THE HEBRON DISTURBANCES, HE AT FIRST SAID ALL HAD BEEN RELEASED, BUT THEN SAID 99PERCENT OF THEM HAD.

EMBOFF SAID HE HAD HEARD THAT 20 ARAB YOUTHS WERE STILL IN JAIL AWAITING TRIAL. GONNEN REPLIED THAT HE WOULD CHECK ON THAT, AND WOULD ALSO CHECK ON THE LEGAL STATUS (IN PARTICULAR, REGARDING COURT JURISDICTION) OF JEWISH SETTLERS IN THE TERRITORIES.

6. COMMENT: GONNEN TOLD WITH SOME SATISFACTION OF THE EROSION OF SUPPORT FOR THE ELECTED MAYORS OF THE WEST BANK, WHO HE SAID HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO BE POLITICIANS WHO CANNOT DELIVER. IT IS INTERESTING THAT HE DID NOT ON THIS OCCASION, AS ON PREVIOUS ONES, PUT FORWARD ANY ASSURANCES ABOUT THE (PROPER) RELATIONS BETWEEN THE MAYORS AND THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT. SPEAKING OF THE PLO, GONNEN SAID AT ONE POINT THAT ISRAEL SHOULD NOT NEGOTIATE WITH THEM EVEN IF THE PLO CHARTER WERE CHANGED (TO ELIMINATE PHRASES CALLING FOR AN END TO ISRAEL. THIS UNOFFICIAL VIEW WOULD, WE SUSPECT, MEET WITH THE APPROVAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF MOST ISRAELIS.  
DUNNIGAN

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Review Transfer Date:**  
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**TAGS:** PFOR, IS, JO, XF, PLO  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009